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**MISCELLANY.**

**Indictment of Animals.**—Montclair's new ordinance against barking dogs has some resemblance to a singular feature of the jurisprudence of the middle ages, when animals were indicted for injuries inflicted on human beings. The custom was not abolished in France until the middle of the eighteenth century, and the French court records show that at least 92 such trials took place between 1120 and 1741.

An early instance of the custom was in 1314, when a bull escaped from a farmyard in a village of Moisy in the Duchy of Valois and gored a man to death. The Count of Valois, being informed of the case, directed that the bull be captured and formally prosecuted for homicide. This was done, and evidence was given by persons who had seen the man attacked and killed. The bull was thereupon sentenced to suffer death, which was inflicted by strangulation, after which the carcass was suspended from a tree by the hind legs.

In 1386 a sow was executed in the square of Falaise for having caused the death of a child, and 3 years later a horse was condemned to death at Dijon for having killed a man. In 1457 a sow and her six young ones were tried at Lavegny, on the charge of having killed and partially eaten a child. The sow was convicted and condemned to death, but the little ones were acquitted on the ground of their extreme youth and inexperience, the bad example of their mother, and the absence of direct evidence of their having partaken of the atrocious feast.

One of the most grotesque of those trials took place in Basle, when a farmyard cock was tried on the absurd charge of having laid an egg. It was contended in support of the prosecution that eggs laid by cocks were of inestimable worth for use in certain magical preparations; that a sorcerer would rather possess a cock's egg than the elixir of life, and that Satan employed witches to hatch such eggs, from which proceeded winged serpents most dangerous to mankind.

The prisoner's advocate admitted the facts of the case, but contended that no evil intention had been proved, and that no evil result had taken place. Besides, the laying of an egg was an involuntary act, and as such was not punishable by law. Also there was no record of the devil having made a compact with an animal. The public prosecutor stated in reply that the evil one sometimes entered into animals, as in the case of the swine which drowned themselves in the Sea of Galilee.

So the poor creature was convicted, not as a cock, but as a sorcerer, or perhaps the devil in the form of a cock; whereupon the bird and the egg that was attributed to it were solemnly burned at the stake.—New York Evening Post.